

# **Forest Vegetation - Overview**

## **Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests**

### **Forest Plan Revision Collaborative Group Meeting, February 2013**

Management of forest vegetation is governed primarily by the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, and the Forest Management Act of 1976. All of these are aimed at guiding the forests to manage vegetation for diversity, sustainability, and multiple uses.

Forest vegetation varies widely from north to south and lower elevations to upper elevations across the forest. Ecoregions, based on climate and geology, have been identified by Bailey (Idaho Batholith – mostly the Nez Perce NF, and Bitterroot Mountains – mostly the Clearwater NF), and help describe the varied conditions that lead to varied vegetation. In addition, those ecoregions have been further segregated into subsections based on topography, elevation, and soils: Breaklands (lower elevation, generally steep ground along rivers and major streams), Uplands (mid-elevations where the topography is more rolling), and Subalpine areas (high elevation lands that have a varied topography). A map of these subsections is available for each national forest.

Vegetation is described by its composition, size class, density, structure, dead wood, disturbance regimes, and pattern.

- Species across the forest are represented by dominance types.
- Size classes are measured by a range of diameter classes – early seral non-forest, trees 0” to 5”, 5” to 15”, 15” to 20”, and 20” and greater.
- Densities are described by trees per acre and basal area per acre.
- Structure is a description of how many canopy levels are present.
- Dead wood is both standing snags and down wood on the ground. Down wood on the ground will be described in the Soils section.
- Disturbance regimes talk about fire types and frequencies, as well as insects and disease that affect the forest.
- Patterns are described by patch sizes. These are related to disturbance regimes, as that is what produces the pattern of vegetation across the forest.